# Rights in Action

Identify constitutional protections in a city case

**USG.C.6.4.C** "Identify basic rights, liberties, and protections of due process protected by the Bill of Rights and subsequent constitutional amendments."

NAME _____ DATE _____

## 1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

**YOUR JOB** Underline at least six distinct rights or legal protections in the passage, and write the number of the amendment protecting each in the margin beside it.

### The Library Meeting and the Constitution

1. Imagine a city council meeting about whether to close a neighborhood library. Residents gather outside with signs, and one speaker tells the council that the plan is unfair. The First Amendment protects speech, peaceful assembly, and the right to petition government, so officials cannot punish residents simply for opposing the plan. A resident also wears a symbol of her faith to the meeting. The First Amendment protects religious exercise and bars government establishment of religion. These liberties do not make every action legal, but they limit what government may forbid because of a person's beliefs or message.

2. After the meeting, an officer suspects a resident has taken a city laptop. The Fourth Amendment protects people against unreasonable searches and seizures; a search of the resident's home generally requires a warrant based on probable cause, unless an exception applies. If prosecutors charge the resident, the Fifth Amendment requires due process and protects against being forced to testify against oneself. It also bars a second prosecution for the same offense after an acquittal. The Sixth Amendment protects the accused person's right to a speedy, public trial, an impartial jury, and assistance of counsel in a criminal case.

3. Suppose the resident is convicted. The Eighth Amendment forbids cruel and unusual punishments and excessive fines; even a conviction does not erase those limits. The Fourteenth Amendment later required states to provide due process and equal protection of the laws. Through court decisions, its due process clause also makes most Bill of Rights protections apply to state and local governments. That matters here because the council and police work for a city, not the federal government. Constitutional protections shape how officials investigate, charge, and punish people, not just what people may say at a meeting.

## 2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Which First Amendment protections apply when residents speak against the library plan and gather outside with signs?

2. Which amendment protects the resident if an officer wants to search the resident's home? According to the passage, what does such a search generally require?

3. If prosecutors force the resident to testify against themself and delay the trial, which protection applies to each action?

4. Which amendment limits an excessive fine after conviction? Why does that limit reach city officials?

## 3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Invent a new situation involving a state or local government, different from the library meeting or laptop case. In four sentences, name two different amendments, describe one protection from each, and explain how each limits the government's actions.

ANSWER KEY

# Rights in Action

HIGH SCHOOL · USG.C.6.4.C

## PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline at least six distinct rights or legal protections in the passage, and write the number of the amendment protecting each in the margin beside it. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

## PART 2 · ANSWERS

| # | QUESTION | ANSWER |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Which First Amendment protections apply when residents speak against the library plan and gather outside with signs? | **Freedom of speech, peaceful assembly, and the right to petition government apply.** |
| 2 | Which amendment protects the resident if an officer wants to search the resident's home? According to the passage, what does such a search generally require? | **The Fourth Amendment protects against unreasonable searches. A home search generally requires a warrant based on probable cause, unless an exception applies.** |
| 3 | If prosecutors force the resident to testify against themself and delay the trial, which protection applies to each action? | **The Fifth Amendment protects against being forced to testify against oneself. The Sixth Amendment protects the right to a speedy trial.** |
| 4 | Which amendment limits an excessive fine after conviction? Why does that limit reach city officials? | **The Eighth Amendment forbids excessive fines. The Fourteenth Amendment makes this Bill of Rights protection apply to state and local governments.** |

## PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

At a state criminal trial, a judge refuses to let the defendant's lawyer assist her. The Sixth Amendment protects the right to assistance of counsel, so that refusal is unlawful. After the jury acquits her, the prosecutor tries to bring the same charge again. The Fifth Amendment's ban on double jeopardy blocks a second prosecution for that same offense.

Accept other accurate First Amendment protections for question 1 if students connect them to actions in the passage. For the open task, check that the four sentences describe a new situation and correctly apply protections from two different amendments.